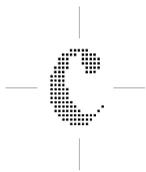


Research Project on 'Rehabilitation, Sustainable Peace and Development'

## **Building Peace in War-Torn Societies: From Concept to Strategy**

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## **Preface**

This paper is part of the exploratory research project ‘Rehabilitation, Sustainable Peace and Development’, executed by the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’. The project aims at reviewing relevant literature and donor practices in the field of post-conflict rehabilitation. The initial findings laid down in a discussion paper were discussed by policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of NGOs during an international seminar in February 2001. Options for policy action as well as a future research agenda in the field of post-conflict rehabilitation were identified during this seminar. This has resulted in seminar proceedings, this paper, as well as two project proposals for follow-up research.

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The contents and views expressed in this paper are the sole responsibility of the author and should not be ascribed to the Clingendael Institute or to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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## Executive Summary

Following a period of violent conflict, war-torn societies face many challenges. These include the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, resettlement and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons and the reform of governance structures. In many cases, societies themselves lack the human, institutional and financial resources to tackle these problems. International assistance to these key areas of peace-building is therefore instrumental. This study deals with the concept of ‘peace-building’, focusing on what is needed to come to a strategic framework for more effective peace-building programmes that take into account local needs and capacities.

The first task is to reframe the different concepts in the field of international peace-building, as these do not reflect the requirements of targeted support in the complex reality of war-torn societies. Marshall Plan-type ‘solutions’ are often incompatible with the multidimensional nature of contemporary ‘post-conflict’ situations, and tend to overemphasize the economic factor in a wide range of structural problems. The practice of distinguishing assistance in three separate categories (relief, rehabilitation and development) is another aspect of international assistance to war-torn societies. Although the international community agrees that such a continuum approach is based on the wrong assumptions, this has not prevented operational agencies from programming their assistance accordingly. The latest fashion can be found in the use of the concept of ‘peace-building’ that is increasingly being propagated in international policy circles to strengthen a particular war-torn country’s capacity to prevent a relapse into conflict and develop sustainable peace.

In addition to conceptual clarity, there is a need for more targeted response. Although many donor organizations are developing inventories of peace-building instruments, such toolboxes are often not linked to organizational capacities or matched with local needs. This often results in fragmented programming and insufficient coordination between different actors. Setting priorities is regarded as one of most important prerequisites for redressing these limitations. In view of the political nature of the problems in ‘post-conflict’ situations, this paper argues for a strategic focus on governance institutions. The challenge lies in fostering those mechanisms and social arrangements that are able to redress the mobilization of tensions into violent conflict. The state plays a crucial, though by no means exclusive, role in this process and should be assisted in making itself better able to manage conflicts non-violently.

In order to incorporate the reframed concept of ‘peace-building’ and the focus on conflict-managing institutions into organizational behaviour, there is a need for a consumer-oriented framework that guides future strategic decision-making in the field of peace-building. Such a ‘post-conflict’ and policy assessment framework can help decision-makers, both at the local and international level, in developing a more effective approach for the implementation of policies in war-torn contexts.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 An Early Example of Rehabilitation...

In 1947, the American Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, proposed the European Recovery Program, later known as the Marshall Plan. Five years of war had destroyed Europe's physical infrastructure, social and economic systems – in the form of schools, houses, food supplies and stable currencies.<sup>1</sup> Governments in Europe and abroad realized that the separate European countries would not be able to recover from this misery by themselves and urgently needed foreign assistance. With the creation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, the US government between 1948 and 1952 transferred approximately US\$ 12 billion of economic aid to the various participating European countries. Aid consisted primarily of currency support in order to rebuild Europe's physical infrastructure. This was combined with food supplies to cater for the needs of especially the urban population.

## 1.2 Or an Inadequate Response to Conflicts?

The Marshall Plan still dominates contemporary thinking on rehabilitation. There are many people who propose some form of Marshall Plan for war-torn countries – i.e. a large-scale reconstruction programme to reinvigorate the economic structures of a particular country.<sup>2</sup> However, the historical, political and socio-economic contexts, as well as the type of assistance needed, are completely different.

The financial and institutional conditions in West European countries in the 1940s and 1950s, for example, were crucial for the Plan's relative success. Although governmental and banking systems were physically severely damaged in many European countries, the know-how indispensable for the effective operation of these systems was still intact.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, insufficient human and institutional resources and a limited absorption capacity of governmental and private organizations in many developing countries makes it virtually impossible to inject enormous amounts of financial assistance into their economies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Griffiths *et al.* (1997), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The media are one of the actors that now and then come up with ideas to design a Marshall Plan for countries that have just gone through war and face socio-economic and political depression. See also Seelye (1999) and Carbonnier (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Klemann (1997), pp. 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Carbonnier (1998).

Next to institutional deficiencies, there are also political and socio-economic obstacles that will hinder Marshall Plan types of intervention for countries ravaged by conflict. Considering the budgetary constraints and diverging political agendas among donor countries,<sup>5</sup> it appears a valid question to ask whether donor countries are willing and able to give war-torn societies such financial, political and even moral support. Apart from humanitarian aid, most donor countries seem to be reluctant to commit themselves to long-term rehabilitation programmes, especially in countries where the violence can flare up again any time. For this reason alone, the repetition of a Marshall Plan for contemporary 'post-conflict settings' seems highly unlikely.

Moreover, one can question whether support to the balance of payments is the panacea for the complex problems of countries recovering from conflict today. To solve their structural internal problems, they need more than financial aid alone. Issues to be addressed include poverty, governance reform, and in the case of war-torn societies, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reconciliation.

International assistance to these fields has become prominent over the last decade. Until now, however, 'post-conflict' or peace-building assistance has taken, at best, a partial but often uncoordinated and ill-informed approach. The poor international record that no less than 30 per cent of worldwide conflicts that have ended resume within ten years<sup>6</sup> shows that 'post-conflict' or peace-building assistance has only been marginally successful. If the challenge of peace-building – preventing future conflict and creating sustainable peace – is taken seriously, support to war-torn societies requires a clear (international) strategy in which appropriate assistance is channelled primarily to those institutions that are able to transform violent conflict into a peaceful process of political decision-making. This serves the dual purpose of fostering those arrangements that are able to accommodate disputes at various levels non-violently, while trying continuously to monitor the impact of peace-building policies on the conflict situation. Such a focused approach corresponds to current thinking that calls for a strategic framework for peace-building, identifying clear priorities and operational goals for assistance.<sup>7</sup> This approach will form the backbone of this paper.

### 1.3 Outline of the Report

Some critical points will be raised in this paper that follow from the literature and international practice in the field of 'post-conflict' rehabilitation and peace-building. It does not provide a complete overview of all the relevant topics and discussions in the field, but tries to identify the strengths and weaknesses of international assistance in 'post-conflict' peace-building. Focusing mainly on the institutional aspects of peace-building, it will outline a strategic framework for peace-building policies.

In chapter two, the concepts of rehabilitation and peace-building will be discussed. From physical reconstruction to the more inclusive term 'peace-building', the chapter will address the articulation of underlying assumptions, applicability to certain contexts as well as the objectives to be reached.

Chapter three will focus on the operationalization of peace-building objectives towards concrete policy actions. Prioritizing a political-institutional focus, it will discuss the options for transforming violent conflict into political debate. More specifically, concrete policy instruments – such as

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<sup>5</sup> Carbonnier (1998).

<sup>6</sup> African conflicts are even more prone to restart: half of African peace restorations last less than one decade. Source: Bigombe *et al.* (2000), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Cousens and Kumar (2001); Cockell (2000); Miall *et al.* (1999).

governance reform, post-conflict elections and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration – will be addressed.

Chapter four highlights some limitations and practical problems of external assistance to peace-building. These include the bias of the technical, ‘quick fix’, the lack of ownership and insufficient coordination of peace-building programmes.

The report concludes by presenting the building blocks for a process-oriented and strategic framework to peace-building. Using a ‘post-conflict’ and policy assessment framework as an intermediate tool for individual donors to effective peace-building, the outlines of a strategic framework will be sketched. Such a framework should enable better analysis of the conflict situation, establish priorities for action, specify the role of actors, prepare a strategic plan of action and set guidelines for implementation as well as monitoring the effects.

The final chapter presents the main conclusions of the report.

## 2 Concepts: From Rehabilitation to Peace-building

### 2.1 Introduction

The complex reality of contemporary conflict requires a thorough and detailed analysis of the context in which rehabilitation programmes are inserted. By focusing on the context, assumptions and meanings of 'rehabilitation', how the concept gradually evolved from 'linking relief and development' into a more comprehensive process of developmental 'peace-building' can be traced. This is instrumental for a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of international peace-building.

#### *Features of Conflict*

Understanding contemporary violent conflict is not easy. Each has its own particular origins and is embedded in a unique socio-economic, political, military and cultural setting. In the words of Goodhand and Hulme, conflict can be termed 'a struggle between individuals or collectivities, over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to assert their values or claims over those of others'.<sup>8</sup> This struggle over entitlements or claims does not necessarily imply that conflict will turn violent. Conflict can be regarded positively as well, in that it is a normal form of social interaction. The definition of violent conflict as it will be used in this paper comes to the fore when 'society cannot represent, manage or resolve its different interests in a productive manner, thus initiating a degenerative or destructive cycle of violence'.<sup>9</sup> The aim of conflict prevention then is not to prevent conflict as such, but 'to reduce the likelihood of specific conflicts becoming, or continuing to be, physically violent'.<sup>10</sup> In order to reach this goal, the nature of conflict first has to be analysed more closely. Either termed 'conflict', 'war', or, more fashionably, 'complex political emergencies',<sup>11</sup> they can be characterized by the following features:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 14, quoting Kapila (1996).

<sup>10</sup> Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> There is a lot of debate around the terminology of conflict. At the international seminar that was part of this research project, participants preferred the common-sense terms 'war' or 'conflict' to academic variations such as complex political emergency, low-intensity conflict, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Citing Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 16.

- a) they occur within and across state boundaries. Although conflicts might originate or take place within a particular state, they also have its regional origins, spillover effects and involve numerous external actors;
- b) they are political in nature. The competition for power and scarce resources is the central dynamic in social conflicts;
- c) they have multiple and interconnected causes;
- d) they are protracted in duration. They may subside and escalate over time so that sporadic violence and the threat of violence become the accepted social norm.<sup>13</sup> They also tend to develop dynamics independent from the original causes;
- e) they are embedded and are expressions of cleavages within existing social, political, economic and cultural structures;
- f) they involve 'predatory' social formations. Often ethno-nationalist in nature, conflicts involve groups that can be mobilized and violently manipulated by conflict entrepreneurs and political leaders.

#### *From Open Conflict to Fragile Peace: Stages of Conflict?*

'Simplistic dichotomies between peace and conflict must be avoided as the habitual association of violence with disorder, and peace with the return of order, is an oversimplification'.<sup>14</sup> In the state of 'fragile peace' or 'latent conflict', conflicts are either subsiding or re-emerging depending on whether society is able to cope with tensions or not. In 'open conflict', tensions have escalated into violence, manifesting in a 'high-intensity' fashion or in a protracted form.<sup>15</sup> When analysing conflict over time, one is often tempted to distinguish between phases of pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict. For the purpose of this paper, focusing on the post-conflict period *seems* to be obvious. Coined as the 'logical' next step after the conflict itself, the 'post-conflict' period is considered to be that phase in the life cycle of a conflict when the hostilities between parties in the conflict have ceased.<sup>16</sup> In practice, however, tensions may flare up again and a fragile peace may relapse into conflict. Conflict should therefore be recognized as a social process triggered into violent action by an interrelated set of structural tensions, which are continuously being reshaped as well. The pivotal factors that lie at the root of the conflict are often nestled in more structural causes related to political-military aspects of state representation, legitimation and institutional capacities.<sup>17</sup> If these factors are not adequately addressed in resolving the conflict, renewed conflict is highly probable. Cases in point are the protracted conflicts in Sierra Leone and Rwanda, where consecutive governments have been unable to establish representative institutions that account for increasing socio-economic and political inequalities among different groups in society. Acknowledging the blurred reality of neither war nor peace in many war-torn situations therefore renders the prefix 'post-conflict' almost obsolete.

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<sup>13</sup> Warner *et al.* (1999), p. 6, citing *World Disasters Report 1998* (IFRC (1998)). The duration of conflicts increased from an average of 0.14 years in 1945 to 14.46 years in 1995; see Siccama and Oostindier (1995), p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Stepputat (1997), p. 21, quoted in Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Van de Goor and Verstegen (2000), pp. 9-10, citing Warner *et al.* (1999).

<sup>16</sup> For a theoretical analysis of the anatomy of conflict see Bloomfield and Moulton (1997), pp. 98-115.

<sup>17</sup> Douma *et al.* (1999), pp. i-xi.

## 2.2 Rehabilitation: Linking Relief and Development?

Closely related to thinking in stages of conflict is the linear thinking in development cooperation that distinguishes among different phases for relief, development and rehabilitation. ‘Relief’ refers to the provision of primary goods such as food, shelter, medicines and clothes. ‘Development’, on the other hand, points to long-term activities directed at structurally changing the socio-economic and political institutions in order to decrease people’s vulnerabilities. ‘Rehabilitation’ is often placed in between, and comprises short- to medium-term reconstruction activities and increasingly also activities in the field of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration, institutional and political reform.

In order to emphasize the relationship between the different types of assistance, the concepts were brought together in policy and academic circles under the heading of ‘linking relief and development’.<sup>18</sup> From the 1960s onwards, the linking debate was based on a linear model of relief and development, wherein relief aid was concentrated in the earliest operational phase of assistance for survival<sup>19</sup> whereas development assistance would start after the conflict was over and reflected the return to ‘normality’ in the linear development process. In the 1980s, the continuum model of relief and development was developed, bridging the gap between relief and development activities. Rehabilitation was said to assuage the negative symptoms of relief<sup>20</sup> by fostering local coping mechanisms (reducing dependency) and strengthening institutional capacities. In the continuum model, rehabilitation thus acquired a more institutional and even developmental focus.

However, the continuum model also aroused many debates within academic and policy circles as well as among practitioners. Problems concerning the assumption of a (still) linear conflict cycle, budgetary constraints,<sup>21</sup> lack of government in war-torn situations,<sup>22</sup> the artificiality of separating relief and rehabilitation<sup>23</sup> and the lack of political will to fund rehabilitation assistance eventually overhauled ‘continuum thinking’.

Although humanitarian and development practice still uses the discredited continuum model, conceptually a more integrated and multidirectional approach for relief, rehabilitation and development is being put forward. Such an approach takes into account the more inclusive, coexisting and even overlapping aspects of relief, rehabilitation and development<sup>24</sup> and channels the appropriate mix of assistance activities to a specific conflict situation.

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<sup>18</sup> Important reasons to link relief and development through rehabilitation can be found in the duplication of structures, inefficiency of procedures, negative side effects and high costs (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994)). See also Seaman (1994), Lautze and Hammock (1996), Speth (1999), Brandt (1997), Smillie (1998) and Green and Ahmed (1999).

<sup>19</sup> Pugh (1995), p. 329.

<sup>20</sup> By itself, relief may heighten tension and hinder development rather than underpin stability (Pugh (1995), p. 329).

<sup>21</sup> As Macrea *et al.* argue, ‘rehabilitation does not fit conveniently into a particular funding envelope’ (Macrea *et al.* (1995), p. 678).

<sup>22</sup> If rehabilitation is seen primarily as a development activity, rather than as a relief intervention, the presence and recognition of a legitimate national government will be a necessary condition for international finance (Macrea (1997), p. 197).

<sup>23</sup> Rehabilitation programmes aimed at delivering activities with a more profound scope and impact than relief aid can lay the foundations for structural sustainable development activities. Conversely, relief can be targeted in such a way that it contributes to more structural changes such as boosting the local economy as well.

<sup>24</sup> In such a ‘*contiguum*’ approach, relief, rehabilitation and development are not sequenced, but coexisting, with changing importance not only in time, but in space as well (Bruchhaus (1999), p. 4 and Smillie (1998), p. xxv). An example of this can be found in the ‘development for peace approach’ that has been propagated by the former

### 2.3 The Concept of Peace-building

A term that is increasingly being used in order to reflect the overlapping activities in the field of conflict and peace is the concept of ‘peace-building’. Although used as a form of confidence-building during the Cold War and an instrument in reducing conflict around issues of economic inequality,<sup>25</sup> the concept of peace-building gained real momentum as a policy concept within the UN framework. Asked by the Security Council in 1992 for recommendations to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali came with the concept of ‘peace-building’ in his *Agenda for Peace*. As such, it is part of the United Nations’ strategy for the resolution of conflict, which consists of four components:<sup>26</sup>

1. *Preventive diplomacy*: action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur;
2. *Peacemaking*: action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations;
3. *Peacekeeping*: the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well;
4. *Post-conflict peace-building*: action to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.

Apart from the above features, the concept of UN ‘peace-building’ is characterized furthermore by long-term political, economic and social provisions to address the causes of conflict, the interdependent quality and consequent importance of coordination and the ‘circle of preventive peace-building’. The first defining characteristic points to the core of peace-building, which lies in the stimulus to transform society, with an economy and institutions all geared to the effective prosecution of war to a society based upon and further promoting peace. Galtung has termed this the associative feature of the peace-building process, not merely addressing the ending of hostilities (‘negative peace’) but also the ‘root causes’ of conflict (‘positive peace’).<sup>27</sup> The interdependent quality refers to the notion that peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building are not separate activities, but are either mutually supportive or mutually corrosive. Making peace by successfully ending the hostilities and keeping it by monitoring the parties’ compliance with the peace agreement that has been reached in negotiations provides the mandate for peace-building. If aptly coordinated, peace-building can effectively contribute to the peacemaking and peacekeeping process. Finally, peace-building can complete the circle by insuring against the recurrence of conflict by building capacities for, among others, labour negotiation, civil society reconciliation, fair courts, and an electoral process that enable a society to resolve its conflicts before violence breaks out.

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Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk (Pronk (1996), pp. 3-4). He stressed the importance of promoting development activities that could sustain peace activities even *during* conflict situations.

<sup>25</sup> Pugh (1995), p. 321.

<sup>26</sup> Boutros-Ghali (1992), p. 11. His analysis builds on ideas and developments in the fields of peace research and conflict resolution and the literature on disaster relief and sustainable development (Miall *et al.* (1999), p. 186).

<sup>27</sup> Cockell (2000), p. 16, referring to Galtung (1975).

Defined as ‘post-conflict peace-building’ in the 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, the concept gradually developed further in the 1995 *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*,<sup>28</sup> where peace-building was said to be instrumental in achieving peace not only in the ‘post-conflict’ phase but in preventive diplomacy as well. This implies that ‘peace-building should be defined broadly by its activities and objectives rather than by its sequencing in a peace process’.<sup>29</sup> In practice, however, except for some NGO activities, most multilateral and bilateral peace-building assistance follows the approval and implementation of a peace agreement. In spite of the operational qualities of many contemporary peace-building programmes, the development of the meaning of ‘peace-building’ in practice has lagged behind the extensive use of the concept, resulting in a relative absence of consensus among its users on the question of appropriate implementation.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.4 Peace-building Practice

Over the past decade, a number of international policies, declarations and operational frameworks for assistance to war-torn societies have been brought forward. Generalizing from the literature, the different practices of international peace-building can roughly be divided into two extremes.<sup>31</sup>

### *Deductive Approaches*

Approaches of a deductive nature have an instrumentalist focus and are based on peace-building tools and capacities available to the international community<sup>32</sup> in assisting war-torn societies. The 1992 *Agenda for Peace* stimulated international efforts in order to concretize and operationalize the concept of ‘post-conflict peace-building’. This manifests itself most clearly in the drafting of inventories of peace-building activities, international colloquia to assess international agencies’ capacities, etc.<sup>33</sup> The identification of ‘strengths and weaknesses’ helps in pointing out organizations’ comparative advantages and draws attention to the difficulty of interorganizational coordination and cooperation. Despite the important work done under the international peace-building banner, problems with this approach are numerous.

In the early 1990s peace-building focused merely on *post*-conflict situations, reflecting the linear thinking about conflict, where peace-building takes place only after the phases of preventive diplomacy (conflict prevention), peacemaking (conflict ending) and peacekeeping (conflict management) have been completed. This prevented the inclusion of conflict prevention as one of the major objectives of peace-building. The 1995 *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* rectified this shortcoming.

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<sup>28</sup> Boutros-Ghali (1995).

<sup>29</sup> Galtung (1975), cited in Cockell (2000), p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Cockell (2000), p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> For this paragraph, I follow the analysis of Cousens and Kumar (2001), pp. 5-10.

<sup>32</sup> The term international community here refers to a certain combination of multilateral and bilateral agencies, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sector firms.

<sup>33</sup> Examples of these include the UN’s *An Inventory of Post-Conflict Peace-Building Activities* (1996) and UNDDSMS/UNIDO’s 1995 International Colloquium in Stadtschlaining report on *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Strategies*. A recent exponent has resulted from discussions in the Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (CPR) Network: CIDA (work in progress) *A Compendium of Operational Frameworks for Peace-building & Donor Coordination*.

Secondly, due to the inventory nature of the international effort to define peace-building, the resulting approach remains rather segmented. Toolboxes and corresponding assistance activities are identified, without however connecting the available capacities to the identified needs. Once the capacity matrices are completed, attention shifts to the operationalization of organizations' strengths. However, there is no comprehensive strategy that tries to outline the long-term goals for peace-building, let alone identify appropriate avenues to make use of those strengths in war-torn situations. In addition, questions of priorities among peace-building activities or of overlapping or potentially contradictory mandates are largely avoided.

Finally, the deductive approach to peace-building seems to pay little attention to the needs, interests and particularities of the local conflict situation to which assistance is channelled. Even worse, it often assumes that each instrument or activity is equally appropriate in each war-torn country. This has forced some to speak of the international community's 'standard operating procedure'.<sup>34</sup> An emphasis on the supply side of peace-building risks prioritizing mandates and procedures over long-term strategies, local needs and capacities. Late response, inappropriate assistance and the danger of negative impacts on the peace process are possible implications thereof.

### *Inductive Approaches*

In explaining the social, economic, and political factors that have contributed to or even caused the conflict, the inductive approach to peace-building focuses on the conflict itself and aims to identify appropriate avenues for (external) action that may redress those causes. In this more 'demand-driven' approach, international assistance is asked to support the peace process based on locally identified needs. Moreover, it offers the opportunity for local capacities to be seen as crucial resources in peace-building, which need to be supported, not supplanted, by external assistance.<sup>35</sup> However, this approach also has its shortcomings.

Firstly, the identification of causes of conflict is a complex undertaking. Both in policy and in academic circles there is a lot of debate about the relative importance of the different 'root causes'.

The lack of clarity and the changing dynamics of the particular conflict itself hinder the identification of priorities and an appropriate strategy for peace-building for local as well as international actors.

Moreover, the international community is often not equipped to design appropriate strategies based on causal relations of conflict factors. Supporting peace-building requires not only the identification of relevant 'toolboxes', but also the application of donor instruments to a particular 'post-conflict' situation in an effective way. To do so, the translation of a continuous conflict and peace trend analysis into policy decision processes is something that requires further attention.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, collaboration and coordination between local and international capacities for peace-building are still problematic. The challenge lies in identifying and supporting strategic local efforts by appropriate and timely (financial as well as political) international assistance.

### *Conclusion*

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<sup>34</sup> Miall *et al.* (1999), p. 186.

<sup>35</sup> See, among others, Doyle and Sambanis (1999).

<sup>36</sup> Efforts in this direction include, among others, *Conflict Prognosis: A Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework* of the Clingendael Institute (Van de Goor and Verstegen (2000)); *DFID Guide to Conflict Assessment* (DFID forthcoming); and the *Conflict Prevention Handbook* of the Conflict Prevention Network and the European Commission (CPN/EC forthcoming).

One of the explanations for the lack of international consensus on appropriate peace-building approaches can be found in the broad definition of peace-building, which tends to widen and even confuse the focus of its implementation. The inclusion of basic human needs, poverty and unemployment as causes of conflict, for example, has equated the peace-building agenda with long-term development policies. This practice, however, disregards the overriding importance of the *political* nature of building peace. Research findings have shown that the role of socio-economic variables in the causation of conflict is ambiguous and the relationship at best indirect.<sup>37</sup> In addition, there is growing recognition that peace-building efforts themselves cannot avoid political impact given the volatility of the contexts in which they take place.<sup>38</sup>

## 2.5 Objectives of Peace-building

The lack of international consensus is also closely linked to the absence of identified objectives and priorities for peace-building. Successful peace-building in war-torn countries is said to involve a 'triple transition': a security transition from war to peace; a political transition from authoritarianism (or totalitarianism) to a more participatory form of government; and a socio-economic transition, including the rebuilding of economic capacities and, frequently, the movement from a controlled to a market economy.<sup>39</sup> Although all are considered necessary ingredients for the creation of a self-sustaining peace, there is no agreement among the international community about what the relationship between the three is and in what chronological order they should be addressed. This paper argues that the transition from conflict to peace and the prevention of a relapse into conflict has to be the primary aim of any peace-building activity. For if threats to peace that inhibit the state, individual citizens and society as a whole from functioning properly continue to exist, no progress can be made with redressing the causes of conflict through, for example, reform of governance institutions or the economy as a whole.

One of the crucial factors in enhancing or deteriorating security are the actions and motivations of certain people who obstruct the effective implementation of a ceasefire because their security or personal interests are deemed completely or partly unaddressed in proposed (institutional) arrangements. This can be further complicated by the parties' simultaneous struggle to satisfy the disparate demands from factions within their own ranks or even beyond their control.<sup>40</sup> If in that position they can benefit more from non-compliance, they might frustrate the peace process. Such 'spoilers' can be defined as 'leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it'.<sup>41</sup>

Stedman finds the explaining factor for the success and failure of 'spoiler management' in the role that international actors play as custodians of peace. According to Stedman, damage has been

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<sup>37</sup> See Douma *et al.* (1999) and Klugman (1999).

<sup>38</sup> Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Forman and Patrick (2000), p. 5. See also Pugh (1995), pp. 329-330 and Kumar (1997).

<sup>40</sup> Miall *et al.* (1999), p. 190.

<sup>41</sup> Stedman (1996), pp. 369-371. The cases of Hutu extremists in Rwanda in 1994 and Jonas Savimbi's refusal to accept the outcome of elections in 1992 in Angola provide gloomy examples of the results that spoiler actions can have if they succeed. On the other hand, similar examples of spoiler behaviour by the Khmer Rouge during 1991 and 1993 in Cambodia and the attempts of RENAMO in Mozambique showed that peace-building and peace itself are not always necessarily halted by parties who attempt to 'spoil' the process.

limited and peace has triumphed in cases where international custodians have created and implemented coherent, effective strategies for protecting peace and managing spoilers.<sup>42</sup>

The most effective way to incorporate ‘spoilers’ as well as regular ‘stakeholders’ is to cultivate those political processes and institutions that can manage group conflict without violence but with authority and, eventually, legitimacy.<sup>43</sup> The crux in peace-building, therefore, is located in redressing the mobilization of tensions resulting from the underlying causes of conflict. The political institutions that mediate those tensions – and have the potential to trigger as well as contain violent conflict – should therefore be more explicitly articulated in peace-building practice. Ultimately, such a focus on governance touches on the role of the state, which according to dominant thinking is *still* the primary unit for the organization and structure of civil power in societies. Simply *rebuilding* the state, however, might risk the re-establishment of socio-economic, political and military structures that contributed to the volatile situation *ex ante*.<sup>44</sup> In countries like Somalia or Liberia, where the state is virtually absent or lacks all legitimacy, it remains to be seen whether developing state structures would be the soundest way of establishing an alternative to violent power struggle. Nevertheless, the problem of recurring violence is one of the symptoms of the core problem that is not being solved – i.e. the poor development of the state as an appropriate institution for dealing with its citizens’ differing interests and their entitlements to these interests.

Concerning the specific activities that can be grouped under peace-building assistance, it is therefore useful to implement them with a perspective of conflict transformation, i.e. considering the extent to which they contribute to non-violent political discourse. The examples of Kosovo, Rwanda and Bosnia demonstrate that the local and international effort to prevent a relapse into conflict and foster a self-sustaining peace tends to be one of trade-offs and compromises. Electoral processes, for example, may exacerbate political differences and even increase conflict under certain conditions, just as there are obvious tensions between the priorities of peace, reconciliation and justice.<sup>45</sup>

A political focus for peace-building does not mean that the international community should promote or even prescribe certain political institutions. Instead, it should try to identify ‘those relationships, processes, mechanisms and institutions that hold the greatest promise for ongoing conflict resolution, which may not always look like those in Western states’.<sup>46</sup> This should lead the international community to ‘facilitate the conditions that constitute an appropriate context for these structures to emerge’.<sup>47</sup> In fostering that climate, the nature of the transition process is more important than the ‘political engineering’ of specific institutional arrangements. The involvement of different actors at different levels in society is crucial in this respect. If the transformation process is not rooted in viable inter-group relations,<sup>48</sup> the proposed institutions and structures will almost certainly collapse.

Concluding, the primary objective of peace-building requires a focused and proactive international strategy addressing the power distribution and prevailing interests, fears and demands of

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<sup>42</sup> Stedman (1997), p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> This approach can be found in a recent volume of the International Peace Academy. See Cousens and Kumar (2001).

<sup>44</sup> Reasons for this may include discontent with ‘official’ government policy, insufficient communication between those in power and the general population, and, more fundamentally, exclusion from socio-economic and political decision-making.

<sup>45</sup> Miall *et al.* (1999), p. 194.

<sup>46</sup> Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 16. See also Adedeji (1999), p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 184.

<sup>48</sup> Elements comprise capacity for dialogue and compromise, public security and participation. See Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 186.

the contending parties and population. To manage spoiler behaviour successfully, international as well as national or local<sup>49</sup> intervening actors need to make a good diagnosis of the specific type, number and position of spoilers and select an appropriate (inducing, socializing or coercing) ‘stick and carrot’ strategy to tackle the problem.<sup>50</sup> In order to prevent a relapse into conflict, a peace-building strategy should prioritize those activities that aim at ‘establishing institutions that reward moderation and encourage compromise among contending interests’<sup>51</sup> while being cautious of those donor-assisted activities that might spur violent conflict.

Long-term actions aimed at creating a self-sustaining peace will have to focus on structurally changing institutional arrangements that can enable the inclusion of not only contending parties but also marginalized population groups. Through these institutions, also the socio-economic and psychological dimensions of peace-building can eventually be addressed.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the development of the concept of peace-building. In its course, the paper has argued in favour of a strategic focus on conflict-managing institutions. This does not mean that peace-building should be limited to programmes for developing a vibrant ‘culture of politics’. More developmental types of projects focusing on psychosocial reconciliation, socio-economic inequalities, impoverishment, et cetera, are essential in developing societies that are less prone to conflict in the future. However, in view of shrinking international commitment (both in resources and time), the predominantly political nature of most conflicts, and the possibly negative impact that ‘normal’ peace-building activities can have, priorities for peace-building will have to be set. Focusing on the processes and institutions that are able to prevent the resurgence of violent conflict as well as hold enough potential to manage spoiler behaviour seems a logical choice for a strategic peace-building framework. In the next chapter, democratization will be presented as a tool for fostering those institutions.

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<sup>49</sup> Stedman’s study on managing spoiler problems in peace processes only addresses the strategies and actions of external (international) actors.

<sup>50</sup> This requires, among others, ‘an attempt to segregate the stated rationales of the primary protagonists from their real interests’ (Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 189).

<sup>51</sup> Rothschild (1996), p. 227.

## 3 Democratic Peace-building

### 3.1 Introduction

Democracy is regarded as an effective political system for handling conflict, both externally and internally.<sup>52</sup> The international community therefore considers assistance to the process of democratization as ‘a major investment in internal and international security’.<sup>53</sup> Examples include elections, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, security sector reform and human rights. In this light, it is important to realize that these fields represent crucial elements of democratization, although they are rarely a sufficient condition or goal in themselves. Following the definition of Kumar, the concept of democratization refers to ‘the process through which countries develop institutions, behaviour patterns, and a political culture that contain the exercise of power within the limits established by representative institutions and the rule of law’.<sup>54</sup>

The specific set of institutions that has to be supported in each war-torn society is context-specific. In countries like Angola, Mozambique and some countries in Eastern Europe issues like liberalization, decentralization, and the demobilization of a large proportion of the national army are priorities for the peace-building process. In other countries, the challenge lies in the restoration of the state’s legitimacy (Guatemala) or, in its absence, primary state structures and conflict management institutions will have to be developed (Somalia). Crucial in this respect is that external support to these processes is not imposed and so that its intrusion represses domestic policies for conflict management.

The paragraphs below will focus on democratic institutions that are exemplary of their conflict-managing potential and form the international community’s ‘new post-conflict agenda’.<sup>55</sup> The special role of ‘civil society’ in this respect will also be highlighted.

### 3.2 Governance Reform

‘Civil wars signify failed political systems that could not perform essential governance functions, thereby generating political insurgencies. The need, therefore, is not to go back to pre-crisis conditions but to move in a different direction’.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> However, the question of whether the ‘democratic peace proposition’ also applies to intra-state conflicts is still highly debated.

<sup>53</sup> Reychler (1999), p. 39. Another, economic, explanation of the international (donor) community’s interest in promoting democracy can be found in the expectation that a successful transition to democracy will enhance political stability and result in a widening of market access (Reychler (1999), p. 42).

<sup>54</sup> Kumar (1998c), p. 215.

<sup>55</sup> Uvin (2001).

Reforming governmental structures in war-torn situations that are severely damaged or completely in ruins is essential in creating the institutional capacity and necessary security for preventing a relapse into violence. This does not merely comprise the construction of government buildings but also the development of conciliatory and effective administrative procedures that serve to create a culture of non-violent political discourse. In some cases, this means that bloated bureaucratic procedures and overregulation have to be cut down and the size of the political apparatus has to be diminished. In other cases, this means a strategy of capacity-enhancing measures, aimed at enlarging and improving the capability, credibility and legitimacy of political systems both within the government and among civil society organizations. In order to achieve this, the state should not be completely dependent on external support but will have to mobilize domestic resources through some form of taxation.<sup>57</sup>

In general, governance institutions have to be based on the rule of law, the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers and some form of involvement of the national population in administrative and political decision-making. If, in the end, political structures do not effectively accommodate the entitlements of conflicting groups in society but are still based on undemocratic power relations, chances are that tensions around the struggle for scarce resources will escalate into violence again. Therefore, finding political mechanisms representing, managing, and preferably resolving conflicting interests is one of the most pressing issues to be addressed in peace-building.

### **3.3 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**

Disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants into civilian society can make an important contribution to conflict prevention as they are in a 'powerful' position to spoil the peace process in a later stage.<sup>58</sup> The DDR process, which normally takes three to four years to complete, consists of four consecutive phases: assembly, discharge, short-term reinsertion and long-term reintegration.<sup>59</sup>

In the first phase of the DDR process, the ex-combatants are assembled in cantonment areas and provided with basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, sanitation facilities and health care. Assembling the troops<sup>60</sup> serves the purpose of accounting for all combatants and their weapons and is meant as a confidence-building measure between the parties who committed themselves to the peace process. In this phase, the combatants of the different parties have to be disarmed. Experiences from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Angola have shown that full-scale enforced disarmament is only feasible if the security concerns of the parties are credibly assessed and met by the monitoring mission.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, there have to be sufficient economic and political incentives to encourage the former combatants to look for alternative means of employment.

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<sup>56</sup> Kumar (1997), p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> The imperative to restore domestic revenue in order to rebuild the state is often forgotten or not acted upon in peace-building programmes (Green (1999), p. 34).

<sup>58</sup> Ball (1997), p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> This paragraph follows the analysis of Ball (1997), pp. 87-90. For another study into these issues see, for example, Berdal (1996).

<sup>60</sup> Such troops comprise a variety of people, including male, female and child, military and non-military and signatory or non-signatory ex-combatants. It has been argued by several authors that child soldiers should not undergo assembly, but if possible should be placed under psychological counselling as soon as possible in order to prepare them for reunion with their families (see, for example, Ball (1997), p. 96).

<sup>61</sup> Adekanye (1997), pp. 360 and 362, citing among others Ekwall-Uebelhart and Raevsky (1996).

After a limited amount of time, usually within one year, soldiers are discharged and transported home. This entails assistance in the form of short-term food supplements, transport, and in some cases orientation meetings in their home districts and initial reinsertion benefits.

The next phase covers the transitional period of leaving the cantonment camps and starting a civilian life. Delivering housing material, basic (agricultural) supplies such as seeds and tools and other cash and in-kind payments are meant to provide a safety net and incentives for the war veterans and their families to start a 'normal' life again.

The reintegration phase should incorporate the veterans and their families into civilian society again and make them financially independent by enrolling them into income-generating activities. Reintegration activities comprise vocational training, counselling, credit schemes and access to land. In order to assuage the community's negative attitudes towards demobilized soldiers and to increase the chances of successful reintegration, the community members also need to be involved in both the preparation and the implementation of the programmes, for example by obtaining some benefits.

Crucial in the process of DDR is that the consecutive phases need to be fully completed by the soldiers if the separate programmes are to be effective. Hence, if a comprehensive programme for reintegration does not follow the disarmament component, chances are that former combatants are not attracted to the prospect of remaining idle and might see more opportunities by continuing the battle or engaging in all sorts of criminal activities. Experiences with failed DDR programmes furthermore show that the DDR programme itself should be incorporated in a wider strategic approach encompassing the different elements of political, social and economic rehabilitation.<sup>62</sup>

### **3.4 Security Sector Reform**

Reforming the institutions of the security sector<sup>63</sup> – responsible for defence against external threats, the maintenance of law and order, and overseeing the security forces – is essential in the restoration of trust and credibility that local people need to have in governance institutions.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the provision of adequate security is crucial in conflict management.

This is one of the reasons why the international community is focusing its attention on what is called 'security sector reform'. This addresses not merely improving the professional training of independent police forces or prison officers, but also covers issues such as enhancing respect for human rights throughout the security sector and improving the performance of supervising bodies such as the ministry of defence.

Reassessing missions and structures and enhancing transparency, accountability and civilian control over security forces remain difficult issues to be addressed in any country, but even more so in war-torn situations. The situation in emerging democracies and post-conflict societies is complicated by the fact that they have to deal simultaneously with the 'fundamental issue of establishing a tradition of civilian control, as well as the establishment of institutions for democratic governance, under circumstances of political instability and security threats, (...) a weak institutional capacity of the state

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<sup>62</sup> Research institutions underlining this integrated concept of DDR include the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the projects on demobilization and reintegration of the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) and the War-torn Societies Project of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

<sup>63</sup> For studies in this field see Ball (1998 and 2000) and Hendrickson (1999).

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Kumar (1997) and Mettle (1996).

and economic hardship'.<sup>65</sup> Reforming the institutions responsible for security under such conditions can therefore become a quite hazardous undertaking. If the security sector is not sufficiently addressed or incorporated in the process of fostering mechanisms for political dialogue, they can develop in a relatively autonomous manner. In the worst scenario, they remain outside political, civilian control.

Peace-building programmes should therefore not merely be planned and implemented as short-term package deals for training police officers or building prisons. Instead, a long-term strategic approach to security sector reform is needed if we want to foster civilian-controlled security arrangements that are able to contribute effectively to preventing and managing the escalation of violent conflict.

### 3.5 Post-Conflict Elections<sup>66</sup>

Elections can provide an opportunity to reform the political system in a particular war-torn society and to make it more responsive and politically legitimate to its constituencies. Assistance in this field comprises supporting logistics and strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations for voters' education and election monitoring, as well as the development of an electoral infrastructure including the creation of independent election commissions. Although with clear target dates, the timetables for this assistance have to be adequate and flexible, as original stringent time schedules have proven to be counterproductive in Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the international community can provide essential support in the form of international monitoring missions, which reduce the risk of large-scale fraud but more importantly contribute to the overall credibility of elections and acceptance of the results by the contenders.

In view of the negative effects that elections and the creation of new governance systems can have on the precarious equilibrium of differing political positions,<sup>68</sup> it is crucial to make an assessment of the appropriate timing of elections. In this respect, three different conflictual pre-electoral scenarios have been distinguished:<sup>69</sup>

- Liberia in the early and mid-1990s exemplifies a first scenario. Here, institutional and political arrangements for elections were organized without hostilities having ended. In spite of several ceasefire agreements and international pressure, conditions were not sufficient to initiate elections under such circumstances and might even have deteriorated prospects for future elections.
- The scenario in which all conflicting parties participate in an electoral strategy under strong international pressure without, however, having completed the process of DDR already provides more perspective for the possibilities of holding elections. But also here, the danger exists of one or more parties leaving the process or denouncing the results, as happened with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia before the 1993 elections and with UNITA after unfavourable results in the 1992 elections.
- The scenario in which the DDR process has successfully been completed before elections start holds the most potential for successful elections. In the latter case, ex-combatants and their leaders have been able to accustom and institutionalize themselves non-violently in the political process,

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<sup>65</sup> Van de Goor (2001), p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see Kumar (1998a).

<sup>67</sup> Kumar and Ottoway (1998), pp. 231-232.

<sup>68</sup> Pugh recalls that elections and associated adversarial politics might easily heighten tensions rather than dampen them (Pugh (1995), p. 323).

<sup>69</sup> Kumar (1998a), pp. 44-45.

with elections now being a political alternative to raise attention for their interests. If actively involved in the electoral preparations, both governing and ex-combatant parties can ‘normally’ participate in the post-conflict elections under international monitoring and assistance.

These scenarios point to certain preconditions that have to be met before elections can be successfully organized. As Kumar and Ottoway emphasize, the success of elections and democratization depends not on the elections themselves but mostly on the social, economic and political circumstances in the particular countries.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the follow-up after elections is just as important and should involve a comprehensive strategy for improving institutional governance capacity. ‘Post-conflict’ elections are merely part of a broader process of national reconciliation<sup>71</sup> and political movement towards multiparty democracies.

### 3.6 Human Rights

In many war-torn societies, there is a necessity for improving the human rights situation. In conflicts such as in El Salvador, Guatemala or Sudan, rebel as well as government forces and corrupt judicial systems have contributed to gross human rights violations, often directed at minorities or other vulnerable groups in society. Bringing to trial the perpetrators of such crimes and reforming the involved institutions is a prerequisite for any government trying to restore its legitimacy, credibility and impartiality. Moreover, if human rights are not properly protected, psychosocial healing and reconciliation at community level cannot take place. The foundations of building a democratic political order will in that case remain unstable.<sup>72</sup> This aspect of peace-building has proven to be a sensitive item in international assistance. There exists a tension between on the one hand victims who demand restitution and punishment for the crimes inflicted upon them, and on the other hand a new or transitional government that is unable to condemn forcefully the perpetrators in view of future national reconciliation.

The international community has supported several institutions that address human rights:

*War crime tribunals*, inside or outside the country, are an important instrument in confronting regime-based or -condoned violations of human rights by bringing to trial those responsible for the perpetration of those crimes. In addition, domestic prosecution of war criminals could simultaneously contribute to judiciary reform in the particular country.

The creation of *truth and reconciliation commissions* in order to prevent national amnesia concerning what has happened during the period of violent conflict forms another important instrument.

*Human rights field operations*, such as the dispatching of comprehensive (UN) human rights monitoring missions, can function to train the candidates for national and international civilian police forces, monitor military peacekeeping operations and report on abuses of human rights.

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<sup>70</sup> Preconditions that are essential in this respect include: the existence of a state capable of performing the essential functions expected of it; a *working* consensus among the former warring parties about national boundaries, the structure and functioning of the government, and relations between national and sub-national units; a demonstrable political commitment on the part of the major conflicting parties to comply with the arrangements in the peace accords; and finally there has to be significant progress in the process of DDR (Kumar and Ottoway (1998), p. 235).

<sup>71</sup> In this respect, they have been termed ‘reconciliation elections’ (López-Pintor (1997), p. 43).

<sup>72</sup> Kumar (1997), p. 9.

In view of a context-specific approach, and realizing that in some particular cases it might be better not to establish such arrangements, there are some general points to which the above-mentioned institutions can contribute:

- prevent or curb the issuing of false denials from the side of the perpetrators;
- avert collective guilt, as criminals will be sought among individuals, not in communities;
- allow the victims and perpetrators to tell their story, a painful but necessary step in reconciliation;
- make an important contribution to preventing a repetition of atrocities;<sup>73</sup>
- form a signal of the new regime's commitment to re-establishing standards of truth and accountability in both society and state.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.7 The Role of Civil Society

The paragraphs above focused mainly on the role of the state in peace-building. However, the development of a 'culture of peace' with the appropriate conflict-managing institutions also involves the broad range of organizations termed 'civil society'. They can function as important catalysts for 'grass roots' change towards democratization, represent their local constituencies in decision-making processes and serve as 'watchdogs' for government actions. The increasing awareness among international donors regarding the important role of civil society in peace-building has led to growing support to all sorts of local organizations. There are some good reasons for allocating peace-building assistance through the civil society channel. These include the level of assistance ('grass roots'), a 'people-centred' approach (focusing on reconciliation between and within communities) and their appreciation for local coping mechanisms and 'local capacities for peace'.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, however, there are also limitations. A lack of accountability, biased assistance (related to 'dubious constituencies') and a relatively small influence on peace processes beyond the local level are among the most pertinent shortcomings of a civil society approach to peace-building.<sup>76</sup>

In order to increase the effectiveness of international peace-building we need a better understanding of not only the complex set of tasks that have to be carried out but also of the different actors and their role in transforming war-torn societies.

### 3.8 Conclusion

The institutions discussed above all have the potential to contribute to capacity-building for conflict management. Assistance to these institutions is part of the long-term and complex process of democratization. However, if these fields of democratization assistance truly constitute the new post-conflict agenda, the international community needs to be constantly aware of their potential (positive but also negative) impact on the peace-building process. Feedback thereof into future planning of conflict-managing institutions is part of a strategic framework for peace-building.

Moreover, a long-term perspective has to sustain the attention for political reform not only up to and through a first series of governance reforms but after that as well. In this respect, Miall *et al.*

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<sup>73</sup> Judge Richard Goldstone of the Constitutional Court of South Africa at the conference 'Facing Ethnic Conflicts' in Bonn 14-16 December 2000.

<sup>74</sup> Silver (1999), p. 16.

<sup>75</sup> For a critical overview see Hilhorst and Frerks (1999).

<sup>76</sup> For a more detailed account of the role of civil society in peace-building, see Frerks (2001).

remind us that ‘it will be the second election – i.e. the first time an incumbent government peacefully hands over power after having lost an election – that will be the significant watershed’.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, the chapter has emphasized the importance of the role of civil society in peace-building. In order to be more effective, future assistance will have to choose carefully the most appropriate channel according to the needs and interests of different actors within a specific war-torn context.

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<sup>77</sup> Miall *et al.* (1999), p. 201.

## 4 Limitations of External Assistance

### 4.1 Introduction

The instruments of peace-building discussed in the previous chapter have the primary aim to create a political system of conflict-managing institutions. The influence of external actors in this respect should not be underestimated. The pressure that the international community can yield on the different contending parties, as well as its support, may provide the necessary credibility to governance reform processes. On the other hand, however, a strong intervention by the international community on governance issues might easily exacerbate the political dynamics of violent conflict. Although it is generally realized that governance reform, DDR, security sector reform, human rights and post-conflict elections are processes in themselves, the way in which they are implemented in war-torn societies suggests otherwise. Biased by a technical, ‘quick fix’ type of approach, external actors try to build peace in a fragmented, *ad hoc* manner. Especially in volatile contexts, the international community has to be cautious when fostering conflict-managing institutions.

### 4.2 ‘Fixing’ Peace

One of the characteristics of external assistance to war-torn countries is the bias towards a ‘quick fix’. Although external actors realize that institutional capacity-building and the development of a ‘culture of peace’ require a long-term, multidimensional commitment, most assistance programmes are temporary<sup>78</sup> and based on quick and technical fixes in the form of disarmament, law and order programmes, infrastructural reconstruction projects, the return of refugees and elections.<sup>79</sup>

Of course, the organization of elections in, for example, Uganda or the creation of a police academy in Kosovo serve important symbolical purposes, not only for the war-exhausted belligerents and the population of the particular regions but for the international community as well. For the latter, it often signals the ‘return to normality’ with some physical security for the population. It may, however, also justify the removal of, or reduction in, foreign military and police forces present in the country. Such an emphasis on ‘exit strategies’ after elections in post-conflict settings can, as experiences in Bosnia and Haiti have shown, prove impracticable and even counterproductive.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Generally, the time span for peace-building programmes ranges from six months to two years. In the eyes of some this need not be a problem if we separate actors from objectives. If external actors are serious with their commitment to promote an indigenous capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully, external international assistance to peace-building will be [and should be] comparatively short term (Cockell (2000), p. 23).

<sup>79</sup> Pugh (2000), p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Garber (1998), p. 2.

### 4.3 Lack of Ownership

The many references to ‘ownership’ in international donor policy have not led to different peace-building practices. In fact, the observation that local actors have failed to react successfully to, or have sometimes willingly promoted, escalation of conflict has often led to the reasoning that external actors should ‘do the job’.<sup>81</sup> Despite donor commitments to take into account recipients’ priorities and build efforts on local capacities, in many cases parallel structures are established. In that way, external interference can have a detrimental effect on the relative autonomy of the internal political processes<sup>82</sup> as well as the commitment to peace and democracy by former war contenders. In the worst case it may hinder the process by which parties reach peace themselves.<sup>83</sup>

Building peace in war-torn countries therefore remains largely externally driven and often results in an experiment of social engineering controlled by actors outside the societies that they are trying to rebuild.<sup>84</sup> Others have taken this argument even further and have argued that peace-building serves the external actors’ own agendas by ‘transplanting Western models of social, political and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalization’.<sup>85</sup>

An alternative to the lack of ownership and the external bias would be to take the disposition of the parties and their relationships, ideas and capacities as the starting point for external assistance. In this connection, donors may help to develop and establish conflict-managing institutions. However, they cannot control their substance. The effective operation of such institutions largely depends on the locally owned political and social dynamics of a particular setting.<sup>86</sup> This also implies that international peace-building assistance has to be receptive and supportive to institutions that may not always conform to Western modalities. Thus, a balance in ownership will have to emerge, which takes into account both local capacities and responsibility as well as international strategic influence in pressuring for peace.

### 4.4 Insufficient Coordination

Despite international efforts to develop institutional guidelines for donor coordination,<sup>87</sup> external assistance to peace-building programmes remains an uncoordinated and essentially *ad hoc* enterprise.

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<sup>81</sup> This includes ‘the assumption that external actors not only wield the power and moral authority to bring about the peaceful change that communities have so signally failed to do’, but also that external actors are endowed with superior techniques for dealing with peaceful change (Pugh (2000), p. 3).

<sup>82</sup> Pugh (2000), p. 9. As Pugh states, however, it is not only the external involvement that can hinder the growth of a viable political culture of non-violence, but local political dynamics as well.

<sup>83</sup> López-Pintor (1997), p. 47.

<sup>84</sup> It is as if ‘the evident destruction and dislocation confronting [external actors] represents a *tabula rasa* on which external scribes can write a peaceful future’ (Pugh (2000), p. 3).

<sup>85</sup> Paris (1997), p. 56.

<sup>86</sup> Uvin (2001), p. 186. See also Zartman, who states that ‘even if others provide the means for the better management of conflicts, those external sources cannot do the actual managing without delegitimizing the process, and in the process delegitimizing the government that should be the agent of management’ (Zartman (1997), p. 47).

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, the OECD/DAC *Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation* (OECD (1997)) and the UN’s *Draft Generic Guidelines for a Strategic Framework Approach for Response to and Recovery from Crisis* (UN (1998)). Similarly, the ‘Brookings Process’ has been developed in order to find out

Reasons for the lack of coordination include the disparate interests of donor countries to assist certain war-torn societies, the different mandates of the various implementing (multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental) agencies, and the problem of burden-sharing and leadership in multi-agency efforts. Combined with the lack of institutional memory, this results in the practice of creating new assistance structures for each war-torn country. The ‘Strategic Framework’ applied for international assistance to Afghanistan and the establishment of Peace-Building Support Offices in, for example, Liberia and Somalia are important test cases in this respect. However, they require further study regarding their effectiveness before replication to other war-torn contexts can be considered.

#### 4.5 Delayed Assistance

‘Generous promises mean little unless they can be translated promptly into accessible, flexible resources that make tangible improvements in the daily lives of long-suffering populations’.<sup>88</sup> This quote hints at the essential requirement of peace-building assistance to be delivered as soon as possible after hostilities have ended in order to induce all parties concerned and consolidate the fragile peace process. The current delays between pledges, commitments and actual disbursements of ‘post-conflict’ assistance risk destroying the hope and commitment of local people to the peace process and might lead to inadequate programming and delivery. The delays can be explained by both internal, demand-side factors and external, supply-side shortcomings. Recipient countries often lack the human, administrative and political resources to ‘absorb’ transparently and efficiently substantial sums of money and aid in kind. The assistance from donor countries, on the other hand, is often ‘repackaged old aid’ reflecting domestic political interests, characterized by lengthy procedural formalities or in contradiction with other donor projects.<sup>89</sup>

Another problem relating to the financial aspect of peace-building refers to the role of the recipient state in receiving assistance. Disbursing large sums of money through bilateral and multilateral channels requires the consent and cooperation of the national government of a particular state.<sup>90</sup> However, this not only reaffirms the strategic role of the state as the chief agent of aid and development in the country,<sup>91</sup> it often makes the state the biggest recipient of donor assistance as well. This might frustrate peace-building policies in which the state itself is one of the structures to be reformed. Providing the state and its traditional proponents with outside financial resources may then legitimize the traditional power structures – which were part of the causes of conflict in the first place – and pose a tough obstacle to wider reform of political systems.

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how the international community, in support of national actors, could better ensure a more successful transition from conflict to sustainable development and peace in societies emerging from conflict. For more information see: <http://www.cpr-network.org/html%5Cbrookings.html>

<sup>88</sup> Forman and Patrick (2000), p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> Forman and Patrick (2000), p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Reasons for this include legal requirements of bilateral and multilateral funding, the long-term, structural character of development-related activities in the field of governance, and the fact that the state is often the only institution capable of receiving those amounts of money.

<sup>91</sup> Pugh (1995), p. 335.

#### 4.6 Lack of Priorities

Contemporary practice in assistance to war-torn societies shows donors' propensity for financing a plethora of small-scale projects across different sectors. This often results in a fragmented approach of supporting only a marginal element in a chain of processes. In case there is no follow-up, the positive impact of that particular activity easily withers. Although this practice corresponds to the broad formulation of donor policies – in which doing something is often falsely regarded as better than doing nothing – it might not contribute to the process of developing institutions that are able to manage violent conflicts. If these are not addressed in the short run and peace remains fragile, the prospects for the implementation of other building blocks for peace remain elusive.

Another reason for identifying priorities can be found in the poor 'rate of return' of spreading investments over a wide range of peace-building initiatives. The high costs of political, social and economic capacity-building in war-torn societies often stand in sharp contrast with the poor outcome in terms of institutions consolidated.

Finally, due to the lack of clearly defined objectives, assessing the 'effectiveness' of peace-building assistance remains problematic.

Therefore, an overall rationale for peace-building is needed, identifying clear objectives, priorities and benchmarks to reach them. In that case, priority setting should be seen as adopting 'a strategic focus on conflict [managing institutions] and the opening of political space, to which other [peace-building goals] may or may not contribute'.<sup>92</sup>

#### 4.7 Conclusion

Although the quick fix might be unavoidable in humanitarian assistance, it should not be applied in peace-building. The dominant approach to peace-building should therefore be re-examined and reframed. This entails coming up with a framework that fosters not only local ownership but builds on local capacities, and takes a more process-oriented approach to create endogenous political capacity to cope with future violent conflict. Furthermore, it asks for priority setting of certain programmes under the guidance of a clear peace-building strategy. Acknowledging and addressing the problematic questions mentioned above are only the first steps in designing future policy action towards war-torn societies.

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<sup>92</sup> Cousens and Kumar (2001), p. 13. See also Cockell (2000) and Uvin (2001) for a similar plea on priority setting.

## **5 Outline of a Strategic Framework for Peace-building**

### **5.1 Introduction**

An effective attempt towards future peace-building has to take into account the different facets, actors, levels and needs in order to design its programmes with a specific focus on fostering institutional arrangements for non-violent political discourse. This requires a highly context-sensitive approach in order to avoid duplication of efforts and establishment of parallel structures. Therefore, donor organizations will have to reframe their policies regarding war-torn societies and develop alternative institutional procedures.

This has two requirements. There is a need for a more systematic and comprehensive study into the role of external actors in peace-building. On the basis of this analysis, a strategic framework for the development of conflict-managing institutions has to be identified that accounts for local ownership, coordination of multiple donor efforts, and effective disbursement of appropriate post-conflict assistance. A detailed elaboration of these elements will be developed in two project proposals as part of a future research agenda in this field. The building blocks of these projects are outlined below.

### **5.2 Assessment of International Assistance**

In light of the limitations of external assistance discussed in chapter four, future peace-building programmes by the international community need to be predicated on the lessons of previous experiences. Although there are many organizations that have produced overviews on lessons learned in peace-building, there are very few assessments focusing on the role of donor organizations in the fields of governance, security sector reform and human rights. The number of studies that focus on the role of international assistance concerning democratization in war-torn societies is even less.

This void in international policy-making asks for a systematic assessment of international assistance to post-conflict societies in order to identify the critical factors that contribute to the success of institutions that help to foster sustainable peace. Such factors may include the role of local and external actors and the question of ownership of the peace process, the commitment of local stakeholders to the establishment of political arrangements for managing conflicting interests and the presence of well-organized civil society and independent media organizations that can serve as ‘watchdogs’ for the behaviour of local, regional and national (governmental) institutions.

Such an assessment has to take into account the extent to which those factors have contributed to or hindered the process of democratization, which is a crucial ingredient in such efforts. A comparative analysis of donor-assisted programmes in several war-torn societies with a special focus

on democratic governance will prove to be a necessary step in improving the results of international peace-building.

### 5.3 Towards a Strategic Framework

Improving the performance of international donors in peace-building assistance cannot be achieved through retrospective analysis alone. Based on clear lessons learned, a strategic framework is needed that caters for a variety of initiatives with different timeframes and the involvement of multiple actors at different levels. However, in drafting a strategic framework for peace-building we need to go a step further than designing toolboxes, as has already been argued in paragraph 2.4. International policy instruments have to be tuned with locally available capacities, and donor programmes have to be tailored to local needs.

The design of a strategic framework for coordinated multi-donor peace-building is one of the strongest ambitions of the international community. The idea is that once each individual donor organization has established a coherent plan of action for peace-building in a certain war-torn context, arrangements can be made for coordination of these efforts in order to achieve maximum effectiveness. One of the biggest difficulties with such a framework, however, is that it has to account for the different policy priorities of individual donors. It assumes that individual donor organizations have established clear policy frameworks that guide their peace-building programmes. This is often not the case. Moreover, if we consider the requirements of an effective and coordinated strategic framework, it appears that individual donor organizations differ in their institutional capacity to furnish adequate peace-building programmes.

Therefore, in order to enhance donor coordination in this field the first step should lie in increasing the coherence of peace-building policies and related programmes at the national, single-donor level. This requires the identification of a ‘post-conflict’ and policy assessment framework for peace-building that focuses on specific actors and their capacities.<sup>93</sup> Aggregating the frameworks of different actors should then lead to a better understanding of the organizational strengths and weakness of the relevant donor organizations and the extent to which they are able to respond with programmes for peace-building that are tailored for a specific war-torn situation.

The elaboration of the actual design of a strategic framework for peace-building exceeds the scope of this paper. However, the most important elements that should be included are listed below.

#### 5.4 A ‘Post-Conflict’ and Policy Assessment Framework

In order to develop a more effective single-donor approach to peace-building, the framework has to comprise the following steps.<sup>94</sup>

##### *Mission Statement*

The first step is to improve the practice of a rather fragmented approach by identifying objectives and priorities for peace-building in a mission statement. In-depth analysis should assess the needs for

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<sup>93</sup> Such a consumer-oriented approach focusing on one specific institution would follow the lines set out in *Conflict Prognosis: A Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework* as identified in Van de Goor and Versteegen (2000) for conflict prevention.

<sup>94</sup> See Van de Goor and Versteegen (1999 and 2000).

assistance, and identify which sectors need to be addressed first in the peace process, and what is required for each particular sector. Within these sectors, the focus should lie on the development of conflict-managing institutions. Each individual donor could finance one particular sector and its accompanying institutions. In that way, focusing on certain sectors in peace-building assistance may help to structure the different responses of the individual donors into an integrated strategic planning and thus prevent the disintegration of donor assistance. After the definition of objectives and priorities, available and appropriate instruments will have to be identified.

The mission statement should thus address the following questions:

- Which war-torn countries will the actor focus on?
- Which goals are aimed for with peace-building assistance?
- What is the timeframe for the goals set?
- Which instruments will be available and used for reaching the goals set?

#### *'Post-Conflict' Analysis*

In order to 'apply' the mission statement to a particular war-torn society, a dynamic analytical model should provide guidelines for policy interventions based on an analysis of the post-conflict 'peace' situation, focusing on indicators and spoiler behaviour. These guidelines should take into account capacities that are already locally available.

#### *Policy and Capacity Assessment*

The next step in the process comprises an assessment of organizational capacities, the 'toolbox' of peace-building instruments, policy assessment and the identification of other key actors. This includes not merely identification of the various local, regional, national and international actors present in a particular war-torn situation, but moreover entails an analysis of the various roles of each actor and an assessment of their capacities. These elements should provide insight into what particular actors have, lack and can combine. It also aims to assess the appropriateness of certain policies and programmes in the context of a particular war-torn situation. Linking this policy and capacity assessment to the findings of the 'post-conflict' analysis should provide better understanding of timely and more effective peace-building efforts.

#### *Implementation of Peace-building Assistance*

Based on the mission statement, 'post-conflict' analysis and policy assessment, priorities for assistance will have to be identified. In this phase, decision-makers will have to make an analysis of the political costs and benefits of the proposed policy priorities. This forms the basis of a planning process that should result in a specific plan of action and eventually in the implementation of peace-building initiatives.

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation of Peace-building Assistance*

The implemented peace-building activities will have to be continuously monitored for their impact on the peace process and periodically evaluated on their effectiveness. A combination of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, such as, for example, conflict and peace impact assessments, can contribute to the necessary feedback of the 'results' back into the above-identified process. Conflict and peace impact assessments provide an adequate instrument to signal missed opportunities and prevent

negative side-effects of future peace-building assistance.<sup>95</sup> Another instrument to assess effectiveness would be to use competing ‘scenarios’ about the likely outcomes of intervention.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, allocating a certain amount of the funds for peace-building programmes to substantive evaluations or longitudinal impact assessments can also be an important instrument for improving institutional memory within donor organizations.

Monitoring impact and evaluating effectiveness may result in a reassessment of policy instruments and redefinition of mission statement, policy priorities and plan of action that take into account a changed ‘post-conflict’ situation.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Based on the limitations of international assistance to peace-building, this chapter has tried to identify some building blocks for a strategic framework for peace-building. This, however, is only a first indication of what should be included and therefore needs further elaboration. In order to be implemented, a strategic framework towards peace-building requires adequate funds and effective disbursement mechanisms. The mechanisms for mobilizing these resources should therefore be reviewed, as the current practice of annual submissions and budgets hinders a timely response. External donors will have to agree on specific institutional arrangements (for example, a trust fund) that channel the collected resources according to a certain timeframe for distribution.

The suggestions made in this paper require institutional changes both in donor as well as recipient organizations. Within donor organizations, the creation of new facilities – such as a strategic framework and separate budget lines for peace-building assistance – is an option. Strengthening the financial, institutional and human capacity of recipient countries is another.

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<sup>95</sup> Reychler (1999), p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Goodhand and Hulme (1999), p. 24.

## 6 Conclusion

The idea behind this paper is quite simple. Based on a reconceptualization of ‘peace-building’ it argues for a more appropriate and targeted international response to the problems and needs of war-torn societies. The chapters in this paper discuss the different ingredients for a more effective approach.

In order ‘to do something in war-torn societies’ the international community first has to *identify the objectives* of its actions. Apart from providing a rationale for external actors’ involvement, the explication of objectives also shows what the variety of peace-building activities are meant to accomplish. Although the challenges in war-torn societies are numerous, this paper argues to focus international assistance on the ‘security transition’ from war to peace. This means that any peace-building activity should contribute to the development of a safe living environment. When violent threats to peace continue occurring it remains extremely difficult to address the causes of conflict.

*Setting priorities* is the second indispensable ingredient. The abundance of peace-building activities and the poor coordination between different assistance organizations, combined with shrinking international commitment – both in resources and time – are some of the reasons why priorities for peace-building will have to be set if we want to increase its effectiveness. In view of the political background of the conflict and the fragility of peace in many war-torn societies, the management of stakeholders and ‘spoilers’ during the peace process is crucial. Priority in peace-building assistance will have to be given to this aspect. This can be done in a variety of ways. In general, however, it comes down to facilitating processes and institutions wherein different actors at different levels can voice their interests and grievances in a non-violent manner. ‘Governance is conflict management’.<sup>97</sup> Effective peace-building therefore requires a carefully balanced ‘governance approach’ aimed at fostering non-violent political dialogue and conflict-managing institutions that can mediate tensions resulting from differing interests and grievances. National actors including the state and civil society organizations should have the lead in this process and are themselves the primary target for such activities. This can be complemented by external actors from the international community, who have to select an appropriate ‘stick and carrot’ strategy to buy in the different actors involved. Other peace-building activities such as post-conflict elections, DDR and human rights, need to be implemented with a perspective of conflict transformation, contributing to non-violent political discourse. This should include a continuous monitoring of the positive or negative impact of (external) peace-building activities on the transition from war to peace, and adjustment of activities if necessary.

A realistic *assessment of national and international capabilities* is another prerequisite. This refers to the need to identify the local capacities for peace-building first, before external assistance is considered. Instead of focusing on incapacities and deficiencies, serious attention should be paid to the available structures and actors operating in the field. This should prevent the establishment of parallel

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<sup>97</sup> Zartman (1997), p. 1.

structures and stimulate ownership of the peace process. A similar assessment has to take place at the international level, in order to see whether the ‘high hopes of peace-building’ can be fulfilled. Inappropriate programmes, and unrealistic planning have in the past contributed to poor international performance in war-torn societies. Organizational and policy assessments of assistance organizations have to provide insight and see whether international actors can do what national actors cannot.

The final ingredient comes in the form of *coordination of peace-building activities*. In order to avoid duplication of efforts and of the existence of peace-building programmes with contradictory objectives it is important to coordinate the response to war-torn situations, both at international and national levels. In this connection, the development of a ‘strategic framework’ approach needs further consideration.

Identifying steps and shortcomings is one thing. Overcoming them is yet another. If the above-mentioned steps are successfully accounted for in future peace-building programmes, the majority of limitations as listed in chapter four could be avoided. However, this should not be a one-time, *ad hoc* exercise restricted to meetings of donor organizations. ‘The proof of the pudding is in the eating’. A more effective peace-building approach therefore requires that these issues be institutionalized into the daily policy-making processes of governmental and non-governmental organizations. A tailor-made institutional mechanism such as a post-conflict and policy assessment framework can help decision-makers to analyse the problems and needs of particular war-torn contexts in a more coherent way and design more appropriate policy-response options for future peace-building.

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